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Thesis

AN INVESTIGATION OF PUPIL PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL CONTROL  
IN THE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS OF CONNECTICUT

Submitted by

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In partial fulfillment of requirements for  
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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### The Problem

Statement of the problem. The purpose of this investigation was to determine the present status and extent of pupil participation in school control in the senior high schools of Connecticut with the ultimate objective of evaluating the program on two bases.

a. Does the program function in accordance with those guiding principles of organization and administration which are deemed necessary for the successful operation of a program of pupil participation in school control?

b. How does the program of pupil participation in school control in Connecticut compare with current practices in general?

Importance of the problem. An accepted major objective of American education today is the development and fostering of good citizenship. So that the youth of our schools will be ready to step into adult life with some knowledge and understanding of the responsibilities and privileges of democratic living that will be required of them in taking their place in a democratic society the schools of today are utiliz-



ing all procedures and techniques at their disposal to attain this objective.

Pupil participation in school control is often cited as an excellent means of aiding in the development of good citizenship. It is important, therefore, to examine the status of pupil participation in school control, wherever possible, to see if this activity fulfills in any degree the claims that are made for it by educators and school personnel.

This problem is extremely pertinent today when the schools are bearing much of the burden of the citizenship training that our youth receive. The daily newspapers and current magazines frequently publish articles citing the poor civic attitudes apparent today among our youth. Crime and juvenile delinquency are at very high levels. The recent war seems to have created a state of uncertainty as to the future. In view of these facts every effort must be made to create and maintain good citizenship for the future security of our nation.

Though numerous studies have been made and much has been written concerning pupil participation in school control no complete study of the program has been made in the senior high schools of Connecticut as far as the investigator could determine. Furthermore, because of the widespread acceptance of this activity throughout the country it was felt that an





analysis of the program in Connecticut might prove of value and interest to all concerned. For these reasons this study has been attempted.

Delimitation. As was previously mentioned, one of the major objectives of our educational system is that of training for citizenship within a democracy. The final contact many of our youth have with formal education is at the senior high school level. It is the task of our educational system to inculcate within these pupils the attitudes and actions of good citizenship before they leave school insofar as it is possible. Pupil participation in school control seems to offer many opportunities for the development of the qualities of good citizenship.

McKown<sup>1</sup> feels that the junior high school probably has a better program of pupil participation than either the elementary or senior high school and that there are few junior high schools without some form of pupil participation. He indicates this is true because the junior high school is of comparatively recent origin and is free of the traditions and vested interests found in many of our high schools.

However, all of our communities do not possess junior high schools. The educational system of many of our towns and cities, particularly the smaller ones, continues to function

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1 Harry C. McKown, The Student Council (McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., New York; 1944.) pp. 21-22.



with the conventional elementary school where pupil participation in school control, until recently, was seldom found.

The majority of our youth today terminate their formal education either during or at the completion of the senior high school level. It would seem that pupils of this age group could, with proper supervision, gain much valuable practice in training for citizenship if a program of pupil participation in school was provided. The high school that possesses some participation program offers an opportunity for learning democratic practices which may have been denied those who were not fortunate in attending a junior high school or elementary school which possessed pupil participation programs.

Connecticut has thirty-one junior high schools extending from grades seven through nine. However, there are ninety-nine secondary schools which extend from grades seven through twelve. Fifty-four of these are either three year or four year high schools. The remaining forty-five schools are either five or six year high schools. It would seem that the majority of Connecticut's secondary schools are senior high schools.

Because the senior high school is the last contact with formal training the majority of our school pupils have today, and because the senior high school is a more common secondary school than the junior high school in Connecticut it appeared





logical to the investigator to examine those secondary schools which included the senior high school grade levels.

Pupil participation in school control is a term which includes all types of programs in which the pupils share in the control of the school. Among the many types of programs are the home room organization, the class organization, clubs and activity groups, athletic associations, forums, and student councils of various types. Among the various plans for pupil participation in school control, the "Student Council" has become the most common, and it usually designates that group of pupils which is a representative body of some larger organization, such as the student body and its activity groups. Unless otherwise indicated the data in this study are concerned with the status and extent of the student council inasmuch as this type of pupil organization is found most frequently. However, where other plans are being utilized and were reported, they have been included in this study.

### Procedure and Technique

General plan. The method used in conducting this investigation was the descriptive-survey type employing the technique of library research to obtain one type of evidence and a questionnaire to senior high school principals to obtain another type of information.

Library research. To attain the objectives and pur-





poses of the investigation it was felt that the underlying principles of pupil participation in school control should be determined. It was also felt that the present status of pupil participation in school control in general should be ascertained. The technique utilized to gain these objectives was that of library research which involved the reading and analysis of considerable literature in the field of inquiry consisting of books, magazine articles and previous related studies.

The preliminary questionnaire. In order to determine the status and extent of pupil participation in school control in Connecticut the questionnaire technique was used.

A three page questionnaire was prepared under the direction of Dr. Worcester Warren, professor of Education of the Boston University School of Education.<sup>2</sup> The type of questions used were of two types, objective and subjective (free responses). Questions used were selected from the many questionnaires used in reports of previous research and were reworded wherever it was felt the problem warranted their change. In addition other questions were formulated for the purpose of this study. The questionnaire contained thirty-one questions.

The preliminary questionnaire with a cover letter and a self-addressed stamped envelope was mailed in February 1947

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2 Appendix, pp. 94-97



to thirty senior high school principals for comment and evaluation in respect to its completeness, length, type of question, arrangement, etc. Replies were received from twenty-two of the thirty schools. Seven of these returns gave suggestions for changes in the questionnaire. Nine schools returned the questionnaire in completed form with no suggestions for change. Of the remaining schools that replied, five answered by letter that they would complete the revised questionnaire, and one indicated that it had no plan of pupil participation in school control in operation.

The final questionnaire. A final questionnaire revised on the basis of comments received from the returns of the preliminary questionnaire was mailed in March 1947. This instrument was three pages in length, contained thirty-two questions and adequate space for additional comments.<sup>3</sup> As in the case of the first questionnaire, it was sent forward with a cover letter and self-addressed stamped envelope to relieve the cost of return postage from the recipient. It was sent to all senior high schools in Connecticut except to those schools which had completed the preliminary instrument or had indicated they had no form of pupil participation in school control. There were eighty-nine senior high schools to which the final questionnaire was sent making a total of ninety-nine schools which re-

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3 Appendix, pp. 98-101



ceived either one or both of the questionnaires. The list of senior high schools was obtained from the Educational Directory of Connecticut, 1946, published by the State Department of Education, Hartford, Connecticut.

#### Sources of Data

The returns. Of the ninety-nine questionnaires mailed to the principals of Connecticut's senior high schools, seventy-eight usable replies were received, either as returned questionnaires or personal letters. These replies have formed the basic data in this investigation. In addition to the questionnaire returns, much valuable information was obtained from thirty-two constitutions of pupil participation organizations which were returned with the questionnaires.

Classification of data. The data furnished by the questionnaires were classified and arranged in tabular form wherever it was felt that the status of pupil participation in school control in the senior high schools of Connecticut could be more readily interpreted. All comments on the questionnaires have been analyzed and have been included wherever they have proven of value in the investigation.







## CHAPTER II

### GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL CONTROL

Training for citizenship in a democracy is realized today as being a prime objective in the functioning of our schools. Democratic citizenship cannot be attained in a setting that is undemocratic. Consequently, the emphasis in recent years has been to democratize our school systems. Theoretically, at least, many of our educational activities within the school are directed toward the realization of this democratic philosophy.

Pupil participation in school control is frequently pointed out as an excellent means of training for citizenship. Though it is realized that this activity provides only one means by which this objective may be obtained, educators, administrators, teachers, and pupils alike have indicated that a program of pupil participation in school control possesses untold opportunities for the realization of democratic living within the school.

If this objective of education is assumed to be valid and pupil participation in school control is recognized as playing a part in the realization of this goal, certain underlying principles must be adhered to if the program is to ful-



fill the claims made for it.

The purpose of this chapter was to examine the literature relative to the principles of pupil participation in school control and to evolve from it a list of underlying principles, which might be used as a guide in the organization and administration of such a program. The principles evolved are considered basic for all types of participation programs.

Purposeful activity. The present day philosophy of education indicates purposeful activity. Citizenship cannot be learned without practice. It must be learned by the actual carrying out of civic responsibilities. In order for pupil participation in school control to justify itself as an agency in the realization of our basic educational objective - citizenship - such a program must provide adequate opportunities for the assumption of responsibilities and the discharge of duties. Training for citizenship presupposes activity. It would seem that an educational situation providing adequate activities with the opportunity for assumption of responsibility and discharge of duty is at present requisite in the organization of a program of pupil participation in school control.

Introduction of plan. A plan for the participation of pupils in the control of the school should fill a need felt - a need of the whole school. Any plan arbitrarily forced upon the school by the administration violates all principles of





democratic procedure. Though it is possible for the administration to initiate such a plan, unless the program is carefully sold to the pupils, the result will be simply an organization with no organic function. McKown<sup>1</sup> feels that a felt need in itself is not enough but that a continuous felt need is necessary if the existence of the program is to be justified. The introduction of a plan of pupil participation is a process of education which cannot be thrust upon the student body but must be the result of education of both the pupils and faculty and this educative process must be continuous.

The plan should be introduced gradually, placing too much responsibility on the students at the outset is not conducive to success. Drewry stated, "a progressive taking over of responsibilities should be provided as pupils increasingly get preparation for and demonstrate ability to assume these responsibilities."<sup>2</sup>

Form and size of organization. Drewry in his criteria for the successful operation of a program of pupil participation, stated, "The best form of pupil organization is that which can be put to work in valuable activities the abundant energies of the largest number of the pupils of the school."<sup>3</sup>

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1 Harry C. McKown, The Student Council (McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., New York: 1944) p. 49-50.

2 Raymond G. Drewry, Pupil Participation in School Control (Harcourt, Brace and Company, New York: 1928) p. 204.

3 Ibid., p. 200.





He continued, "The simplest form of organization that enables the pupil to live most effectively his present life ... is preferable to elaborate schemes adopted from adult governmental forms."<sup>4</sup>

Kelley<sup>5</sup> indicated a similar belief in respect to the imitation of other forms of government. The form of pupil organizations depends on the local situation, there being no principle relative to the establishment of a best form of organization except that imitation of adult government is not necessarily the best procedure.

There is no definite indication as to the size which a pupil participation organization should have. McKown<sup>6</sup> in his book The Student Council indicated that student councils should be neither too large nor too small. Too few members would result in an overloading of duties and responsibilities and too many members would encourage listlessness and inactivity for those with little to do. A similar thought was expressed by Vineyard and Poole,<sup>7</sup> who felt that the pupil participation organization should be large enough to be influential

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4 Ibid., p. 206.

5 Earl C. Kelley, "Utilizing Student Power," Journal of the National Education Association, 25:217-18, October 1936.

6 McKown, op. cit., p. 58.

7 Jerry J. Vineyard and Charles F. Poole, Student Participation in School Government (A. S. Barnes and Company, New York: 1930) pp. 16-17.



over the student body. Brogue and Jacobson, referring to the council form of organization stated, "The size of the council should not be too large ... the working groups ... probably should not exceed thirty members."<sup>8</sup>

Powers and duties. Every plan for the participation of pupils in the control of the school should have as a basic essential a written constitution. Inasmuch as the authority for the pupil's participation is a delegated authority there should be a written document stating definitely and clearly the powers and responsibilities of the group. Vineyard and Poole<sup>9</sup> indicated that there should be a written constitution and that each school should go through the educative process of developing its own. Frank Meyer<sup>10</sup> in his criteria for judging pupil participation in school control indicated a constitution, preferably written, which outlines the organization of the plan and lists the powers and duties of officers as being extremely important.

Pupil participation in school control is a plan whereby the pupils share in the control of the school. It is not an organization of complete student self-government. The basis of democratic government is one of delegated authority and

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<sup>8</sup> Ellen B. Brogue and Paul B. Jacobson, "Student Council Handbook," Bulletin 89, The National Association of Secondary School Principals, 24:39, March, 1940.

<sup>9</sup> Vineyard and Poole; op. cit., p. 19.

<sup>10</sup> Frank Meyer, "Judging School Government" Clearing House, 16: 451-3, April, 1942.





the pupils should clearly see that their authority is delegated to them by the principal who in turn receives his powers from the superintendent of schools who is an agent of the school board representing the people of the community. Pupils should realize that the final authority in any matter pertaining to the administration of the schools is the sole right of the principal and this fact should be definitely stated within the constitution. This is not an indication that the veto power of the principal should be abused but that democratic government has its system of checks and balances in order to maintain the proper respect for law and order. McKown<sup>11</sup> has expressed this principle with clarity pointing out the legal and moral responsibility of the principal in all matters pertaining to the school.

Requirements for membership. Pupil participation in school control is considered by many writers as possessing excellent opportunities for the development of democratic citizenship. If this is assumed to be true, then it would seem that democratic procedures must be utilized in the obtaining of both members and officers. Membership in general should have no restrictions.

There is no apparent justification for the various

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11 McKown, op. cit.; pp. 59-60, 124.





restrictions placed upon membership in the program. There is no logical reason why the faculty or administrator should select the members for the organization. Restrictions above the satisfactory passing of subjects are entirely undemocratic. Such requirements as sex, approval of faculty, high scholarship, and good behavior are seemingly without logical basis. Drewry,<sup>12</sup> though he believed minimum standards were justifiable, stated that membership should be based on the capacity to render actual service. Hageny<sup>13</sup> and Vineyard and Poole<sup>14</sup> are among other writers who believe that each pupil should be eligible to vote and hold office in the student organization, the former believing that even the entire faculty should be members.

Supervision of the pupil participation organization.

Pupil participation in school control in order to be successful and meaningful in the life of the school must have adequate guidance. Without proper supervision in the form of an understanding and sympathetic sponsor the success of the organization may be definitely limited. Furthermore, in addition to the prerequisite of proper guidance, it is absolutely essential that the advisor be interested in the pupil participation plan

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12 Drewry, op. cit., p. 205.

13 W. J. Hageny, "Twenty four Projects of Our Student Council," Clearing House 16: 236-8, December, 1941.

14 Vineyard and Poole, op. cit., p. 18.



and possess the necessary qualifications for the position. McKown has listed eighteen principles relative to the sponsorship of the student council. They are included here as they appear to be a complete summation of the problem of supervision in any type of pupil participation plan.

1. The Faculty Should Recognize and Accept Its Responsibility in Electing Sponsors.
2. The Sponsor Must Really Represent the Faculty.
3. The Sponsor Must Understand and Appreciate the Participation Idea.
4. The Sponsor Must Be Sympathetic with the Participation Idea.
5. The Sponsor Must Be Discriminatingly Loyal to the Council.
6. The Sponsor Should Be an Enthusiastic Member but Not a 'Teacher.'
7. The Sponsor Should Not Make Himself Too Conspicuous in Council Meetings.
8. The Sponsor Must Win and Hold Student Respect and Confidence.
9. The Importance of the Sponsor's Personality Should Be Neither Underrated nor Overrated.
10. The Sponsor Should Have a Wholesome Sense of Humor.
11. The Sponsor Should Have a Good Sense of Relative Values.
12. The Sponsor Should Give Much Time and Thought to the Council's Program.





13. The Sponsor Should Stress and Practice Cooperation.
14. The Sponsor Should Not Be Afraid to Experiment.
15. The Sponsor Should Not Attempt to Prevent All Council Mistakes.
16. The Sponsor Should Not Become Discouraged.
17. The Sponsor Should Study Himself and, If Necessary, Make Personal Readjustments.
18. The Sponsor Should Continue His Training.<sup>15</sup>

Cooperation of the whole school. Reavis has pointed out "Participation must possess a mutual appeal."<sup>16</sup> Without the cooperation of both the faculty and administration a program of pupil participation in school control could hardly be successful. Without cooperation the program approaches a monarchy which is entirely foreign to the concept of democracy. There will be little confidence in the program if the students are conscious of the fact that the faculty and administration are not sincerely cooperative in their dealings with the organization. Kelley<sup>17</sup> indicated a similar belief in stating that the faculty should not try to fool the students but should be sincere in their support of the program. As was indicated above,

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15 McKown, op. cit.; pp. 301-14.

16 William C. Reavis, "Training in Cooperation Through Participation in Secondary School Problems," School Review 50: 629, November, 1942.

17. Kelley, op. cit.; p. 217.





this principle holds true from the viewpoint of the administration and faculty also. Unless the pupils are sincerely cooperative, the program becomes despotic in nature which is entirely foreign to the whole principle of the pupils sharing in the management of the school. Pupil participation must have the support of all concerned and a mutual appeal if it is to be successful and takes its place as a truly democratic process within the school.

Assumption of responsibility. McKown has stated, "The council which has no responsibility will soon disintegrate. It can never have self respect and morale because these are built through the successful discharge of duties."<sup>18</sup> This is true for any plan for the participation of pupils in school control.

One of the objectives claimed for pupil participation in school control is that of training for citizenship in a democracy. It is assumed that democratic living has to be taught, it will not be learned without practice. Learning by doing is the accepted theory today. If the school is to develop good citizenship and the student organization is an agency for the attainment of this goal, the group should have definite responsibilities and adequate opportunity to discharge them. Without practice in living democratic citizen-

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18 McKown, op. cit.; pp. 56-7.



ship through the assumption of responsibility and the actual carrying out of purposeful activities the organization will not reach its objective of developing good civic attitudes.

Meetings and facilities. Meetings of the pupil participation organization should be regularly scheduled and should be held in a regularly assigned room with proper facilities for carrying out the meeting in a businesslike manner.<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, the meetings should be held on school time if the organization is considered an integral part of the school life as it should be.

Continual study. In order for the pupil participation organization to remain a functional part of the school it must continually be alert to changes within the school, and adapt itself to these changes. No school remains entirely the same year in and year out. Philosophy of administration changes, procedures of operation are revised and the organization must be pliable and elastic in order to meet these changes.

Adequate publicity. Pupil participation in school control includes followership as well as leadership. The council, if it is to be an effective agency in the school must continually inform the members of the general student body as to its aims and accomplishments. The pupil participation organization is as strong as the school which supports it and if

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19 McKown, op. cit.; p. 64.





liaison between the organization and the student body is weak the former will lose its prestige in the school. There should be definite ways and means for reporting to the school population the activities of the organization and its accomplishments. Similarly through proper pupil representation the desires and problems of the students at large may be brought properly before the representative group. Thus continuous publicity insures close coordination between and among all groups of the school.

Evaluation. The existence of a plan for the participation of pupils in the control of the school like any other activity of the school should be subject to appraisal. It is presupposed that pupil participation in school control has definite objectives to be attained and it is justifiable to examine the program continuously with the object of discovering the strength and weaknesses of the activity in relation to the objectives. Because the prime objective of pupil participation in school control is the development of good citizenship evaluation becomes difficult as citizenship is a rather intangible and subjective quality to measure. However, attempts should be made to discover whether the program is realizing its objectives and all facts should be ascertained by whatever technique of appraisal is found most suitable for the situation whether it be subjective or objective.





Summary. An analysis of the literature pertinent to pupil participation in school control has revealed an extensive array of principles regarding the participation movement. It has been the purpose of this chapter to examine and select those principles from the literature which seem to be well established and basic to the organization and administration of any type of program of pupil participation in school control.

The following principles seem to be significant in their relation to pupil participation in school control.

1. A plan for pupil participation in school control should be based on a continuous felt need; it should be introduced gradually in accordance with pupil ability to assume responsibility; and should be a continuous educational process for the whole school.

2. There is no best form of organization nor any definite sized group which is ideal; these factors should be determined by the local situation.

3. Any plan for pupil participation in school control should have as a basis a written constitution which definitely states its powers and duties and the source of power and its limitations. Each organization should, if possible, evolve its own constitution.

4. Membership in an organization of pupil participation in school control should be based on democratic ideals and



practices. Membership should be open to all, both pupils and faculty. The restriction of pupils beyond the minimum requirements of scholarship should not be condoned.

5. Pupil participation in school control must have adequate and continuous guidance in the form of qualified sponsors who are sympathetic to the movement, enthusiastic, loyal, cooperative, and progressive.

6. Pupil participation in school control must receive enthusiastic cooperation from the whole school, pupils, faculty and administration.

7. Pupil participation in school control in order to be successful must be based on adequate assumption of responsibility by pupils. This responsibility being achieved through adequate purposeful activities for all.

8. The organization for pupil participation in school control should meet on school time, in a regularly scheduled meeting place, and have all necessary faculties in order to function as a worthwhile school activity.

9. The school must be continuously informed of the policies, and actions of the organization for pupil participation in school control. The strength of the plan is in proportion to the support given it by the school. Effective liaison must be maintained between the organization and student body.



10. Pupil participation in school control must be constantly evaluated. To justify its existence as a part of the school its strengths and weaknesses respective to desired aims must be continuously appraised.





### CHAPTER III

#### STATUS AND EXTENT OF PUPIL PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL CONTROL AS REVEALED BY PREVIOUS RELATED RESEARCH

Pupil participation in school control is considered to be beyond the experimental stage in the American educational system. In fact, it is presently considered to be a well-established activity in our schools. The importance that the movement has taken since its beginnings in America has led many persons to investigate its various aspects.

Much has been written concerning this movement - there being extensive writings dealing with the theory of pupil participation, objectives, principles, practices, and values. Nor has there been a lack of investigation into the field in relation to the status and extent of pupil participation in school control. Many local and regional studies have been made, as well as several which have been carried out on a nation-wide basis.

It was the purpose of this chapter to determine the present status and extent of pupil participation in school control in general from an examination and review of those studies which were felt to be pertinent to the problem of this investigation. Reference was made to these studies wherever it was felt they presented concrete evidence in relation to the pres-



ent status of pupil participation in school control so that an eventual comparison could be made between pupil participation in general and pupil participation in the senior high schools of Connecticut. It is interesting to note that previous research has revealed the student council to be the most frequently mentioned type of pupil participation organization.

No attempt was made in this study to trace the origin, development, and history of pupil participation in the United States as this has been adequately accomplished by McKown<sup>1</sup> and Brogue and Jacobson.<sup>2</sup>

The extent of pupil participation in school control.

The growth and extent of pupil participation in school control seem to have been quite rapid and comparatively recent. In one of the earlier studies conducted by C. P. Archer,<sup>3</sup> who investigated approximately 100 Iowa high schools in 1922, it was found that 22 of 62 reporting had some form of pupil participation. Ringdahl,<sup>4</sup> in a study conducted in 1927, found that

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1 Harry C. McKown, The Student Council (McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., New York: 1944) pp. 1-14.

2 Ellen B. Brogue and Paul B. Jacobson, "Student Council Handbook," Bulletin 89, National Association of Secondary School Principals, March, 1940, pp. 11-16.

3 C. P. Archer, "School Government as An Educative Agency," School Review 31: 480-8, June 1923.

4 N. R. Ringdahl, "High School Student Councils," School Review 36: 329-37, May, 1928.





123 schools out of 179 reporting in a survey of 250 schools had "student government." Drewry,<sup>5</sup> in 1928, discovered that 197 schools out of 256 schools in the country at large had an organized form of pupil participation. C. B. Hartshorn<sup>6</sup> in a study made of Iowa secondary schools in 1931-32 found that of 117 schools surveyed, forty-one of eighty-seven reporting had student participation which indicated some growth of the movement as compared to Archer's earlier study.

Campbell,<sup>7</sup> in 1935, surveyed the private and public secondary schools of the Middle Atlantic States and Maryland Association. He found that 115 of the 217 schools reporting had student councils.

In the more recent investigations carried on, pupil participation in school control seems to have mushroomed in growth quite considerably. Brogue and Jacobson<sup>8</sup> found in a national survey conducted in 1939 that in 1608 out of 1985

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5 Raymond G. Drewry, Pupil Participation in School Control (Harcourt, Brace and Company, New York, 1928) p. 138.

6 C. B. Hartshorn, "Study of Pupil Participation in Iowa School Government," School and Society, 38: 379-82, September, 1933.

7 William L. Campbell, "Student Council Activities of the Secondary Schools in the Middle Atlantic States and Maryland Association." Unpublished Master's Thesis, Temple University, 1935, p. 18.

8 Brogue and Jacobson, op. cit.; p. 16.



schools which returned the questionnaire there was some form of participation. Earl C. Kelley,<sup>9</sup> in his national survey, reported, in 1940, that eighty-six per cent of 1801 schools replying to a questionnaire, sent to 5000 schools of all types, had some form of pupil participation. He stated, "Student participation has become the style in American Education to the extent that most schools today pretend at least to do something about it."<sup>10</sup>

Although these national surveys do not agree too closely with the state surveys recently concluded by O'Reilly<sup>11</sup> and Clement<sup>12</sup> who found fifty-four per cent and sixty per cent respectively in respect to the percentage of schools with pupil participation programs, the differences are probably due to the inadequate sampling of the larger studies. In conclusion, it would seem that the pupil participation movement has de-

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9 Earl C. Kelley, "An Evaluation of Student Participation in Government in American Secondary Schools." Unpublished Doctor's Dissertation, Northwestern University, 1940, p. 103.

10 Ibid., p. 2.

11 Francis L. O'Reilly, "Student Participation in the Government of the School and its Present Status in the State of Wisconsin," Unpublished Master's Thesis, Marquette University, 1939, p. 56.

12 Stanley L. Clement, "The Status of Student Participation in Government in Maine Secondary Schools with Special Reference to Student Councils," Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Maine, 1940. p. 74.





veloped quite rapidly and is a well established activity in American secondary schools, the student council being an extremely popular form of organization.

Methods of selecting council members. There are several means by which the members of the student council may be selected. Research has indicated that in some schools, members are appointed by the administration. Other means which are more democratic but hardly representative of the whole student body, such as selecting representatives from school clubs and organizations, have also been reported. In the more recent investigations, the major bases for selection of council members has been on the basis of classes or home rooms. Nancarrow<sup>13</sup> found in his study of Pennsylvania schools that members were selected on the basis of home rooms in eighty per cent of the schools reporting. Brogue and Jacobson<sup>14</sup> found that the home room was used more frequently than any other means as a basis of selection. O'Reilly<sup>15</sup> found that in seventy-two per cent of the schools reporting this method was used. This method of selection seems logical as the home room

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13 James E. Nancarrow, "The Student Council in Pennsylvania," Unpublished Doctor's Dissertation, University of Pittsburg, 1940, p. 19.

14 Brogue and Jacobson, op. cit.; pp. 35-6.

15 O'Reilly, op. cit.; p. 58.





is the smallest general unit of organization and would be more truly representative of the student body and would probably provide for a better spirit of cooperation between the pupil participation organization and the student body.

Restrictions on membership. Although pupil participation in school control is often exhibited as an example of democracy in the school, democratic procedures and practices pertaining to the organization are frequently lacking. Kelley<sup>16</sup> indicated that nearly three-fourths of the schools reporting in his investigation had restrictions on membership ranging from scholarship to the payment of dues. Brogue and Jacobson<sup>17</sup> found that certain standards of scholarship had to be met in 232 cases out of 361. O'Reilly<sup>18</sup> found that scholarship and conduct were restrictive measures on membership in twenty-eight per cent of the schools reporting. Although minimum standards of scholarship might be justifiable though this seems to be debatable under our present philosophy of democracy in education, many schools appear entirely undemocratic by setting up a variety of restrictive measures such as leader-

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16 Kelley, op. cit.; p. 106.

17 Brogue and Jacobson, op. cit.; p. 67.

18 O'Reilly, op. cit.; p. 66.



ship ability, sex, conduct, appointment by faculty, regular attendance, upper classmen, etc.

Advisors and their selection. One of the basic principles considered necessary for the success of a program of pupil participation in school control is that the activity have adequate supervision and guidance in the form of advisors or sponsors. McKown stated,

The faculty representative is the most important single member of the council ... because he ... must accept responsibility for developing suitable policies and procedures, also for coordinating student and teacher relationships. Obviously then, much of the success of a plan of participation depends on this specialized guidance officer.<sup>19</sup>

Brogue and Jacobson<sup>20</sup> found that 359 out of 361 schools had student council sponsors of which 255 were appointed, the remainder elected. Of those appointed, the majority were appointed by the principal. Kelley<sup>21</sup> found in his study that sponsors spend very little time in working with the pupil participation program, about seventy per cent spending less than one period a day on council matters. O'Reilly<sup>22</sup> found teachers were most frequently the council sponsor with the principal

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19 McKown, op. cit.; p. 300.

20 Brogue and Jacobson, op. cit.; p. 82.

21 Kelley, op. cit.; p. 107.

22 O'Reilly, op. cit.; p. 71.





next in rank order. Clement<sup>23</sup> concluded that the principal should be the advisor or at least have the power of appointment in this matter, although this is not a particularly democratic viewpoint.

Recent studies tend to indicate that most schools do have at least one sponsor for the pupil participation program, that the sponsor is usually appointed by the principal, and that a relatively small amount of time is spent on the guidance of the program.

The constitution. McKown, in addition to others, has stated the need for a pupil participation organization to be based on a written document. He stated,

In a democratic form of government, the purposes of the plan, the sources of authority, the rights, privileges, duties and responsibilities of both electors and electees, and the organization, powers, and activities of the central group must be designated, described, or defined; and these ends are accomplished through a formally accepted and adopted constitution or by laws.<sup>24</sup>

He continued, "The author can see no reason whatever for a constitutionless form of student participation in school control."<sup>25</sup>

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23 Clement, op. cit.; p. 78.

24 McKown, op. cit.; p. 121.

25 Ibid., p. 123.



O'Reilly<sup>26</sup> found that eighty-five per cent of the schools reporting in his study had a constitution. Brogue and Jacobson<sup>27</sup> found that almost eighty-eight per cent of the councils reporting in their survey had a constitution. Other studies have indicated a similar situation regarding a constitution and all reports examined indicated very few schools without such a basic document.

Activities of pupil participation organizations. The present day philosophy of education indicates that learning is achieved through doing. Gone in many schools at least is the belief that learning can be acquired without purposeful activity. Pupil participation in school control is recognized as a plan whereby the students in the school may take active part in its management and control. This cannot be accomplished without allowing the pupil participation organizations the power to coordinate and control activities within the school. If the purpose of the school is recognized as one of developing good citizenship, then the school must provide real learning situations for its participation organizations. Any organization without worthwhile activities is operating within a vacuum

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26 O'Reilly, op. cit.; p. 72.

27 Brogue and Jacobson, op. cit.; p. 40.





and cannot accomplish the purposes for which it was established.

The activities undertaken must be suitable for the particular school as no two schools are alike and activities carried on in one location might be quite undesirable in some other school situation. Kelley<sup>28</sup> indicated that there is room for improvement in the tasks and responsibilities given to pupils. Nancarrow<sup>29</sup> indicated in his study of Pennsylvania schools that there was a need for expansion of activities and an improvement in the type of activity utilized to carry out the council's objectives.

No attempt was made in this investigation to enumerate the activities found in the various studies examined. A very complete treatment of recent student council projects and activities was found in Brogue and Jacobson,<sup>30</sup> McKown,<sup>31</sup> and Harvey.<sup>32</sup> The latter includes fifty activities which were judged worthwhile by a class of graduate students at the University of Illinois, the class being composed mainly of ad-

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28 Kelley, op. cit.; p. 124.

29 Nancarrow, op. cit.; p. 193.

30 Brogue and Jacobson, op. cit.; pp. 89-105.

31 McKown, op. cit.; chapter IX.

32 C. C. Harvey, "Fifty Student Council Activities," School Activities, 13: 133-4, December, 1941.





visors of student councils and principals of schools having councils.

It would seem that there is an almost inexhaustible list of projects and activities for the pupil participation organization. The activities should, in order to be considered justifiable, be of such a nature as to result in the attainment of the objectives of the schools' programs of pupil participation in school control.

Problems in administering the pupil participation organization. Pupil participation in school control like any other activity within the school is faced with problems and difficulties. If there were an absence of difficulties, the value of the organization might well be questioned. The development and training of pupils in the responsibilities of citizenship can only come through the facing of real every-day situations, and although the administration would no doubt prefer a smooth-running organization at all times, such is not the case in practice though it may be theoretically possible.

Vineyard and Poole<sup>33</sup> listed in the following rank order these problems as reported by 167 high school executives:

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<sup>33</sup> Jerry J. Vineyard and Charles F. Poole, Student Participation in School Government, (A. S. Barnes and Company, New York: 1930.) p. 64.



Problem	Frequency
1. Difficulty of securing efficient and successful leaders.	20
2. Problem of getting all pupils to participate in some activity.	14
3. Indifference and lack of cooperation on the part of teachers.	13
4. Students assume too much liberty and power. Mistake liberty for license.	13
5. Lack of sufficient interest among students.	12
6. Difficulty in securing capable and sympathetic faculty leaders or sponsors for various activities.	11
7. Pupils are not willing to accept responsibilities and obligations as they should.	10

Clement<sup>34</sup> concluded that the chief problems found in his study of secondary schools in Maine were the overworking of natural leaders, lack of motivation and preparation, pupil irresponsibility, the dislike to tattle, and poor choice of members.

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<sup>34</sup> Clement, op. cit.; p. 74.





Pupil participation in school control is faced with a variety of problems according to surveys made. Brogue and Jacobson<sup>35</sup> devoted a complete chapter in the "Student Council Handbook" to the problems facing student councils and practical methods that are being used to solve these difficulties.

The values of pupil participation in school control.

Pupil participation in school control in order to be considered a justifiable part of the school program should contribute definite value to the school. Unless it is attaining the purposes and objectives for which it was formed, it must be considered an extremely doubtful program. There is a lack of material to be found in the field of experimental studies concerning the objective analysis of the worth of the student participation plan. Mayberry<sup>36</sup> concluded that participation in the activities of student government by students of high school grade aids in the formation of habits of citizenship. He based this conclusion on the results of an experimental study of two equated groups using as a measuring device the Upton-Chassell citizenship scales. This study is limited, however, and no

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35 Brogue and Jacobson, op. cit.; chapter VII.

36 Burt A. Mayberry, "A Study of High School Pupils to Determine the Effect of Student Council Participation on the Formation of Certain Habits of Citizenship," Journal of Educational Research, 24:305-7, November, 1931.



generalization on the value of pupil participation in school control as a means of developing citizenship can be logically upheld solely on the basis of its results.

The values of pupil participation in school control are frequently mentioned in the literature when considered from a viewpoint of opinion or subjective reasoning. Vineyard and Poole<sup>37</sup> found the following values claimed in an analysis of sixty-five magazine articles dealing with the topic:

It teaches principles and methods of government, such as students need to know in later life.

It trains in leadership, self-reliance and self-control.

It minimizes the need for constantly watching the behavior of students, which is usually offensive to teacher and students. Kelley<sup>38</sup> concluded that though pupil participation had some value in providing an increased tolerance toward rights of other minorities and possessed opportunities for cooperation, many plans of participation were subterfuges by which adults defeat the ends of democracy by exploiting the pupils.

Elbert K. Fretwell in listing his seven purposes of pu-

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37 Vineyard and Poole, op. cit.; p. 57.

38 Kelley, op. cit.; pp. 116-120.





pil participation was actually stating values of the movement which are claimed by many writers. He stated:

1. Pupil participation in government provides a favorable opportunity for the pupil to have a purpose of his own.
2. Pupil participation tends to create a friendly relation between teachers and pupils.
3. Pupil participation can be psychologically remedial.
4. The development of a plan of pupil participation in government is concerned with the development of attitudes in pupils, teachers, and administrators.
5. Pupil participation tends to provide for emotional satisfaction.
6. Participation can make for intelligent obedience to authority.
7. Participation in government is a means of education.<sup>39</sup>

It would seem that in the opinions of educators, pupil participation in school control possesses distinct values which are directly related to the purpose of education today ... that of training for citizenship in a democracy. Although pupil participation is only one means through which this goal may be achieved, it seems that this program has justified its existence in the present day school system.

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39 Elbert K. Fretwell, "Seven Purposes of Pupil Participation in Government," Bulletin 35, National Association of Secondary School Principals, pp. 108-14, March, 1931.





Summary. The following points seem to summarize the current practices found in previous research relative to pupil participation in school control, particularly in respect to the student council organization.

1. Pupil participation in school control has been of comparatively recent origin and has had rapid development in the United States. Most studies of this activity have been confined to the secondary schools. All of the studies reviewed have indicated that the prevailing type of participation organization is in the form of a representative council commonly called a "student council." This council is usually a central organization representing many groups within the school such as the home room, the class, and various school clubs and activities. Previous studies reviewed have dealt mainly with the status of student councils.

2. The major bases for selecting representatives for the student council are the home room and the class, although in some cases these methods are combined with others such as the selection of representatives from clubs and other school activities.

3. Restrictions on membership in student councils were found to be a common practice being evident in at least 60% of the schools recently surveyed on a nation-wide scale.

4. Advisors for student councils were found most fre-



quently to be appointed by the principal. In 70% of the schools reporting in one national survey the advisor spent less than an hour a day on matters pertaining to the student council. The principal was found to be the advisor in many schools, particularly the smaller ones.

5. At least 85% of the schools reporting student council programs indicated they had as a basis a written constitution.

6. The literature revealed an abundance of activities being carried on by various participation organizations. The related surveys indicated that these activities should be purposeful and worthwhile if they are to be considered justifiable.

7. Problems in administering the various student councils are numerous, one of the outstanding ones being that of securing efficient and successful leaders. Lack of participation on the part of pupils and the lack of cooperation of teachers were also of frequent mention.

8. Many values are claimed for pupil participation in school control. Summarizing the specific values mentioned tends to result in the grouping of values around the major purpose of education today - that of training for citizenship in a democracy.





## CHAPTER IV

THE STATUS OF PUPIL PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL CONTROL  
IN THE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS OF CONNECTICUT

The basic source of data for this investigation was the returns from a questionnaire presented to the principals of those secondary schools of Connecticut that extended through the senior high school grade levels. The questionnaire was directed mainly toward those practices pertaining to the student council as previous related research had indicated that this form of pupil participation organization was the most frequently used means of allowing pupils to share in the management of the school. It is the purpose of this chapter to present and interpret these data in order to determine the present status of pupil participation in school control in the senior high schools of Connecticut.

Replies were received from seventy-eight schools out of ninety-nine schools to which the questionnaires were sent. The returns were in the form of completed or partially completed questionnaires or in the form of letters explaining the student council organization or the lack of such a program. An indication of the interest in pupil participation programs was evidenced by a request from 94% of the recipients



for a copy of the summary of the data collected in the study.

The returns. Sixty-nine of the seventy-eight schools that replied to the questionnaire indicated some form of pupil participation in school control was in operation. Of these sixty-nine schools, thirty-nine or 56.5% returned questionnaires answered by principals or assistant principals. Twelve or 17.4% were completed by sponsors or advisors, and ten or 14.5% were answered by teachers, who are probably advisors. Two replies or 2.9% were received from student council members. In six cases there was no indication as to the official designation of the respondent. It is interesting to note that among the smaller schools the principal or assistant principal is frequently the faculty advisor to the council.

Of the sixty-nine schools which indicated some form of pupil participation was in progress 45 or 65.2% are four year high schools. Of the remaining twenty-four schools, thirteen or 18.8% are six year high schools, nine or 13.1% are three year high schools, and two or 2.9% are five year high schools.

The extent of pupil participation in school control. In answer to the question, "Does your school have a student council or any other form of pupil participation in school control?" the following information was submitted. Sixty-nine schools or 88.5% of the seventy-eight reporting schools indicated that they had some form of pupil participation. Of the





six schools reporting which had no form of participation, five indicated a need for pupil participation in the future. Only one reporting school indicated that it had no need for a plan of pupil participation in school control. The remaining three schools reporting indicated that although there was no program functioning at present, it was in the process of reorganization at the time the questionnaire was received. Of the schools which reported, it is indicated that seventy-seven or 98% have, are reorganizing, or have need for a program of pupil participation in school control.

The data would seem to indicate that at least sixty-nine or 69.7% of the ninety-nine secondary schools of Connecticut, which include the senior high school grade levels, are presently engaged in some type of organized pupil participation in school control and that in the future at least seventy-seven schools equalling 77.7% will be operating such programs.

Table I indicates the enrollment of the senior high schools which replied to the questionnaires submitted in February and March of 1947. It also points out the number of schools in each enrollment group in which a plan of pupil participation was reported to be in progress.

An examination of the table would seem to indicate that there is no apparent relation between the size of the school and the operation of a plan of pupil participation in school control.





TABLE I  
NUMBER AND ENROLLMENT OF SCHOOLS WITH  
SOME FORM OF PUPIL PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL CONTROL

Enrollment Group (1)	Number of Schools Reporting (2)	Have Program of Participation in School Control (3)
2000 and over	4	3
1000 - 1999	19	16
500 - 999	14	11
100 - 499	38	37
0 - 99	3	2
Totals	78	69

A tabulation of the results of the questionnaire relative to the length of time the pupil participation organization has functioned indicated that the median age was approximately ten years. An examination of Table II reveals that of the sixty-nine schools reporting, eight organizations had functioned more than twenty years, and one claimed to have been operating for about thirty years. On the other hand, only eleven organizations had been in operation for less than five years, the youngest being two months old. The three schools listed as unclassified indicated they had had pupil participation for "many years." Eight schools failed to make any reply.

Of sixty-nine schools, forty-seven or 68% pupil partici-



pation had been in operation five or more years. This would seem to indicate that pupil participation in school control in the senior high schools of Connecticut was beyond the experimental stage.

TABLE II  
NUMBER OF YEARS PUPIL PARTICIPATION  
PROGRAM HAS BEEN IN OPERATION

Number of Years (1)	Number of Schools (2)	Percentage (3)
30 years or over	1	1.4
25 - 29	2	2.9
20 - 24	5	7.3
15 - 19	6	8.7
10 - 14	16	23.2
5 - 9	17	24.6
0 - 4	11	16.0
Unclassified	3	4.3
No answer	8	11.6
Totals	69	100.0

Types of council organization. Of the sixty-nine schools with some form of pupil participation, sixty-three or 91.2% indicated that they had student councils. In three schools, separate class organizations were being utilized and in the other three schools, participation was on the basis of individual groups with no apparent central organization.

In reply to the question, "What type of council organi-





zation does your school have?" it was found that fifty-nine schools had a single-house form of council. Two organizations were on a two-house arrangement and two were three-house councils. The predominant type of pupil participation organization would seem to be the single house form of student council. The questionnaire did not seek information relative to other forms whereby pupils participate in the control of the school.

An examination of thirty-two student council constitutions submitted with the questionnaires revealed that although basic principles of organization were similar, the detailed organization of the councils was quite varied. This seemed to indicate that the constitutions were a result of a desire on the part of the schools to operate under plans that would meet the needs of the local situation. There was very little indication of any one school adopting the constitution of other schools to any great degree.

In the larger schools utilizing the one house form of council, it was found that much of the council's work was carried on by means of an executive committee in order to expedite the work of the organization. Although only thirty-two constitutions were examined, it was found that the committee system was frequently utilized apparently in order to provide activity for as many as possible in the council and to handle the larger portion of executive detail.



It would seem that the single house type of student council was regarded with much favor as fifty-nine schools or 85.5% of those reporting utilize this form of organization. When asked if the present form of organization was functioning satisfactorily, fifty-seven schools indicated a definite "Yes" and two replied "No". Three administrators qualified their answers and stated, "Fairly satisfactory," "Not always," and "Can be improved." The preponderance of affirmative replies, however, indicates a definite satisfaction with the form and operation of the student council plan in current use.

Membership in the student council. The data collected in this investigation revealed a great variety of methods used to select council members. Selection of members on the basis of classes was found to be the most frequent with twenty-two schools using this method. Closely following was the election of members from the home room, it being reported in twenty cases. It is extremely interesting to note that appointment of members by the principal was not indicated as a method of selection, although in three cases faculty members aided in the appointment of council members. Table III shows the method of selection of members to the pupil participation organization.





TABLE III  
METHODS OF SELECTING MEMBERS OF STUDENT COUNCILS

Method of Selection (1)	Number (2)
Elected by classes	22
Elected by home room	20
Elected by classes and appointment by faculty	3
Elected at large	3
Other methods	17
No answer	4
Total	69

Under the classification of other methods indicated in the preceding table were classified seventeen different methods of selection including combinations of home room, classes, class officers, and activity club representatives and officers, each method being unique in that it was mentioned only once.

In order to indicate one method of selection of student council members classified in Table III as "other methods" an excerpt of a letter from a principal administering a high school of some 1600 pupils is included. He stated,...

We have three high school buildings: the Senior Building, the Freshman Building, and our Technical Building. In the Senior Building the Student Council has been of long duration, made up of the presidents of any activity, club, or class. There is also a stipulation that each class must be represented according to a percentage basis by members elected at





large. The Freshman Building has a student council with representatives from each home room, plus two who may be interested in activities centered in the Freshman Building. The Technical Department has somewhat the same set-up as the Freshman Building.

From these building councils, there is an Inter-Building Council elected, and membership in this is earned on the basis of one representative from each building Council for every one hundred fifty pupils. This Inter-Building Council coordinates the work of the various building councils. This is a new venture having been instigated approximately two years ago. The Freshman Student Council is five years old and the Technical about four...<sup>1</sup>

It can be concluded that 32% of the student council members are selected on the basis of election by classes and 29% are elected by home rooms. Of the seventeen other methods used for selection of council members, it is worthy of mention that the various plans utilize election and not appointment, which seems to be an indication of good democratic practice.

In reply to the question "How many members comprise the student council?" it was found that councils varied in size from a membership of nine in one case to one council consisting of eighty-five members. The larger organizations in actual practice carry on their executive detail through executive groups of a few members. Of sixty schools answering this ques-

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1 Letter from Mr. Carl A. Magnuson, Principal, Bristol High School, Bristol, Connecticut, dated February 11, 1947.



tion, two-thirds had councils of from nine to thirty members. The median size of the student council in the sixty schools reporting was twenty-four members. Table IV indicates the relation between size of school and size of council. The Table is based on data supplied by fifty-seven schools.

TABLE IV  
RELATION BETWEEN ENROLLMENT OF  
SCHOOL AND SIZE OF STUDENT COUNCIL

Number of Pupils	Number of Schools Number of Members in Council				
	0-24	25-49	50-74	75-85	
2000 and over	0	1	0	1	2
1000 - 1999	2	6	2	1	11
500 - 999	6	1	3	1	11
100 - 499	23	8	0	0	31
99 or less	2	0	0	0	2
Totals	33	16	5	3	57

It is interesting to note that forty-nine of the fifty-seven schools which supplied data have councils of less than fifty members, and thirty-three have less than twenty-five members, the latter group comparing favorably with a previous study which indicated working groups should be of thirty or less. In general, it would seem that the smaller schools have smaller councils as no school of less than 500 pupils has a council of over forty-nine members. In fact, only eight





schools have councils with fifty or more members. It is quite likely that some of these larger councils are a result of the fact that the members are selected on the basis of the home room. This would result in large councils particularly in the larger schools.

Restrictions in membership were found to be in use in thirty-five or 50.7% of the schools reporting in the study. Twenty-seven schools or 39.1% indicated that no restrictions were applied to membership in the student council. Seven schools made no reply to this question. This data seems to indicate that there is a large group of school administrators in Connecticut, who believe in democratic procedures in the selection of members for the program of pupil participation in school control.

Table V reveals the type of restriction applied to pupils in respect to student council membership. Outstanding among the factors of restriction is that of scholarship, although there was no indication given that grades had to be more than passing in the replies received.



TABLE V

RESTRICTIONS ON MEMBERSHIP IN THE STUDENT COUNCIL  
AS REPORTED BY THIRTY-FIVE SCHOOLS

Factor (1)	Frequency	
	No. of Cases (2)	Percentage (3)
Scholarship	24	36.3
Behavior	18	27.3
Approval of faculty and/ or principal	14	21.2
Upperclasses	3	4.6
Good citizenship	1	1.5
Sex	2	3.0
Leadership, dependability, general eligibility	1	1.5
Specific factor not given	3	4.6
Total	66	100.0

The data revealed a rather large number of cases where membership is restricted on the basis of behavior. Restriction on the basis of approval by the principal or faculty members was found in fourteen schools. These facts would seem to indicate a lack of faith in the students' ability to select their own representatives and is seemingly far removed from the democratic procedures needed for adult life for which the pupils are ostensibly being trained. The total number of restrictive measures in Table V is greater than the thirty-five schools reporting because several schools applied more than one restriction to membership, among which were three schools applying





four restrictive factors to council membership. Two comments in reply to the question concerning restrictions are included as follows: "Not yet- hope to soon on scholarship," and "No, but any member whose behavior becomes questionable is asked to resign."

Of the sixty-nine schools asked the question, "What is the length of term of office?" fifty-nine schools or 85.5% indicated that the term of office was one year. Two schools indicated that the term of office was for the duration of time in school and in one case, the term of office was reported as two years. Three schools had other systems not readily classified, and four schools failed to answer the question.

Fifty-two schools out of sixty-nine reporting, or 75.3% indicated that a council member or officer could succeed himself in office. Six schools stated that council members and officers could not succeed themselves. One school indicated that the members could serve a succeeding term but that the officers could not, as officers of the council.

Data based on fifty-nine replies to the question, "Are there restrictions on holding office in the council?" revealed that in twenty-one schools or 35.5%, restrictions were found. However, in thirty-two of fifty-nine schools, or 54.2%, there were no restrictions for officership indicated although it is apparent that the basic requirements for membership would have





to be met before a member could be eligible for office holding, as some of these latter schools had previously indicated membership restriction.

From the data, it is evident that the large majority of schools reporting utilize democratic practices in respect to length of term of office and succession in office. Furthermore, over fifty per cent of the reporting schools do not have additional requirements for office holding.

Time and place of council meetings. In answer to the question, "When does the council meet?" the data revealed that about four-fifths of the councils meet during school hours. Fifty-five schools, or 79.8% of those reporting indicated this fact. Four schools indicated that they meet before or after school and three schools indicated that they meet after school. One school indicated that it held its meetings before school, and six schools failed to answer the question.

Fifty-two schools or 75.4% revealed that their council has a regularly assigned place for meetings. Eleven schools or about 16% indicated they had no regularly assigned room for council meetings. One replied that it usually did, and five schools did not reply.

In response to the inquiry, "How often does the council meet?" nineteen schools indicated they meet weekly, and seventeen stated a bi-monthly meeting time. Table VI reveals the times at which the reporting councils meet.



TABLE VI  
STATED MEETING TIMES OF COUNCILS

Time Factor (1)	No. of Cases (2)	Percentage (3)
Weekly	19	27.6
Weekly and on call	2	2.9
Bi-weekly	1	1.4
Monthly	6	8.7
Monthly and on call	3	4.3
Bi-monthly	17	24.6
Bi-monthly and on call	5	7.3
On call	12	17.4
No answer	4	5.8
Totals	69	100.0

The table reveals that 27.6% of the councils meet weekly and that 24.6% meet bi-monthly. A rather large number, twelve or 17.4% meet on call which seems to indicate that a regularly planned schedule of council activities might be lacking.

The student council advisor. The need for proper faculty supervision of a program of pupil participation is considered a basic principle of administration. Of the sixty-nine schools reporting in the investigation, sixty-five schools or 94.2% indicated that the student council had faculty advisors or sponsors. Four schools failed to answer this question. Table VII indicates the number of advisors that are found supervising council affairs in sixty-nine schools which replied to





the questionnaire.

TABLE VII  
NUMBER OF ADVISORS OF THE STUDENT COUNCIL

No. of Schools (1)	No. of Advisors (2)
42	1
15	2
2	3
3	4
1	8
6	No answer
Total	69

It is readily seen that the majority of schools have but one student council sponsor, forty-two or 60.9% of the schools reporting indicating this fact. Another 21.7% of the schools have two advisors. This seems to indicate that the program is considered valuable enough to require two faculty personnel for its operation. As would be expected, most of the smaller schools had but one faculty advisor.

Table VIII indicates the methods used to select the advisor to the council. In fifty schools of sixty-nine, or 72.5% of those reporting, the advisor or sponsor is appointed by the principal of the school.



TABLE VIII

## METHODS USED IN SELECTING SPONSORS

Method (1)	No. of Schools (2)	Percentage (3)
Appointed by principal	50	72.5
Appointed by council	8	11.5
Principal as sponsor	5	7.3
Appointed or elected by faculty	3	4.3
Elected by student body	2	2.9
Appointed by principal and council	1	1.4
Appointed by superintendent	1	1.4
Other	1	1.4
Total	71	102.7

The total received is greater than the sixty-nine schools reporting because in two cases schools used dual methods in selecting sponsors.

The data revealed that the average time spent by an advisor on student council affairs is 2.18 hrs. per week. The most common time elements reported were those of one hour and two hours. In each case, there were fifteen schools that claimed the advisor spent this much time weekly on student council work. Table IX represents the average time spent weekly by advisors on council affairs.



TABLE IX  
AVERAGE TIME SPENT WEEKLY PER ADVISOR ON  
STUDENT COUNCIL AFFAIRS

No. of Hours (1)	No. of Schools (2)	Percentage (3)
Less than 1 hour	7	10.2
1 hour	15	21.7
1-2 hours	17	24.6
2-3 hours	8	11.5
4 hours	2	2.9
5 hours	5	7.3
6-8 hours	2	2.9
No answer	13	18.9
Totals	69	100.0

Thirty-nine schools or 56.5% of those having student councils, have indicated that their sponsors spend two hours or less on student council matters. Only seventeen schools or 24.6% have indicated that their sponsors spend more than two hours per week in working with the council. The data seems to indicate that in slightly more than half of the schools reporting pupil participation in school control, the advisors spend relatively little time in working with their respective groups.

Powers exercised by the student councils. In analyzing the various powers delegated to the councils, it was found that seventeen schools or 24.6% exercised legislative powers only,





another 30.4% exercised both legislative and executive powers. A study of Table X will reveal the various powers of the student councils reporting in this study.

TABLE X

## POWERS EXERCISED BY STUDNET COUNCILS

Type of Power (1)	No. of Schools (2)	Percentage (3)
Legislative	17	24.6
Legislative and executive	21	30.4
Legislative, executive and judicial	11	15.9
Legislative and judicial	2	2.9
Executive	5	7.3
Advisory	2	2.9
Unclassified	2	2.9
No answer	9	13.1
Totals	69	100.0

It is interesting to note that in only thirteen of the schools or 18.8% is there found the exercise of judicial powers. The total percentage is less than 100% because nine schools failed to answer this question.

The data revealed very emphatically that the student council does not function as a student court in many cases. Although thirteen schools indicated that the council had judicial powers, in only seven schools or 10.1% does it serve as a student court and in one case it was indicated that it



was not functioning at present. In fifty-six schools or 81% of those reporting, the student council does not serve as a student court.

In one school reporting, it was indicated that they had a separate honor court which was not a part of the council of the school. The data clearly indicated that in over four-fifths of the schools reporting, that there is no student court and it seems to indicate further a negative viewpoint toward the practice of pupils passing judgment on their fellow students.

In reply to the question, "Does the principal have power to veto council action?" sixty-one schools or 88.4% definitely answered "Yes," and only two schools indicated "No." Of the remaining six schools replying, no answer was received. The comments made in some of these cases are indicative of the fact that the veto power is present. These comments are included to point out how the veto question is handled in two schools, "Never has arisen as a question," and, "No question of this sort has arisen, probably because they generally discuss their plans with him." Inasmuch as the powers of the council are delegated powers, all of the schools should include a statement as to this fact in their written constitutions.

Table XI reveals the percentage it is claimed that the veto power is used. It would seem that in general, it is used





rather discriminatingly. The data are, however, somewhat weak in that they fail to indicate the measures that may have been frequently used other than an outright veto.

An examination of the table will reveal that in twenty-two schools or 31.9%, the veto power has never been used.

TABLE XI

## THE USE OF THE VETO POWER

Use of Veto Power (1)	No. of Cases (2)	Percentage (3)
Never	22	31.9
Very seldom	15	21.7
Seldom	8	11.6
Not outright	2	2.9
No Answer	22	31.9
Totals	69	100.0

It is extremely interesting to note that twenty-two schools or 31.9% failed to answer this question relative to the use of the veto power. It would seem from the data that 36.2% of the schools reporting pupil participation plans use the veto power to some extent.

Table XII shows the feeling of the respondents in respect to the increase of the power of the council. It is readily seen that thirty-three or 47.8% of the schools feel that the council's powers are adequate. Twenty-three or 33.3% of the



schools believe that the powers could be increased. Two individuals indicated that there was no need to increase their powers, and two thought it could possibly be done. Nine schools failed to answer this question.

TABLE XII

DISTRIBUTION OF REPLIES RELATIVE TO THE INCREASE  
OF THE POWERS OF THE COUNCIL

Could the powers of the council be increased? (1)	No. of Schools (2)	Percentage (3)
Yes	23	33.3
No	33	47.8
Possibly	2	2.9
Unnecessary	2	2.9
Unanswered	9	13.1
Totals	69	100.0

In answer to the question, "Does the council have the cooperation of the faculty in exercising its powers?" there was not one completely negative answer. Forty-seven schools answered "Yes" to this question, and five schools qualified their answers, stating that cooperation was not always received from all, very limited cooperation was received, and cooperation was sometimes received but other times not. The data for this question are not as complete as in the other areas



of the survey in that ten schools did not have this question in their questionnaires. On the basis of the returns received, however, it would seem that, in the opinion of the persons replying, the council received cooperation from the faculty members.

The student council constitution. Fifty-nine schools or 85.5% of those having pupil participation in school control indicated that they had a written constitution. Four schools or 5.8% indicated that they had none. Six schools did not answer this question. Several schools indicated they were in the process of revising their constitution. One administrator stated they had a constitution but never used it. Table XIII reveals the percentage of schools with respect to the possession of a written constitution. The data reveals that the student council constitution is a provision in more than four out of five schools reporting.

TABLE XIII

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF SCHOOLS INDICATING THEIR  
STATUS RELATIVE TO A WRITTEN CONSTITUTION

Does Council have a Constitution (1)	No. of Schools (2)	Percentage (3)
Yes	59	85.5
No	4	5.8
No answer	6	8.7
Totals	69	100.0





The possession of a written constitution in itself is of little value. Frequent reference to and use of it would seem to be an indication of its importance in the functioning of the pupil participation organization. In order for the constitution to be understood by both the council and to the student body, it should be made available to them in same manner. Nineteen schools or 27.5% distribute the constitution to the student body, Twenty-nine or 42% do not. Twenty schools or 28.9% post the constitution for the student body, sixteen or 23.2% do not. Forty-two schools or 60.9% distribute the constitution to all council members, twelve or 17.4% indicated they did not. The data revealed that ten schools distribute the constitution to the council and student body and posted it for their benefit. Eight schools posted it for the student body and provided copies to the council members, and five schools distributed the constitution to the student body and the council.

The data seems to indicate that the constitution is to be found in a large majority of the schools and that it is brought before the student council and the student body in various ways or is at least available to them.

Student council activities and projects. The data obtained in this survey indicated a large and varied number of activities were being carried on by the various student coun-



cils. Table XIV indicates the activities and projects of the councils as reported in this investigation.

TABLE XIV  
ACTIVITIES AND PROJECTS OF STUDENT COUNCILS

Activities (1)	Number (2)
Supervision of social affairs	26
Charity drives and philanthropic affairs	21
Supervision and conducting of assemblies	20
Supervision of extra-curricular affairs	18
Raising and disbursing of funds	16
Supervision of traffic	12
Formation of rules for the schools	8
Clean up campaigns, etc.	7
Supervise and help in cafeteria	4
Care of building and grounds	4
Promote school spirit	4
Promote good citizenship	4
Manage elections	3
Supervise athletics	3
Publish handbooks	2
Charter clubs	1
Supervise locker rooms	1





Activities (1)	Number (2)
Supervise fire drills	1
Investigate senior disciplinary cases	1
Maintain scholarship fund	1
Making of awards	1
Supervision of point system	1
Discuss marking system	1
Miscellaneous projects and activities	23

In response to the question, "Does the council take part in or control sufficient activities to keep all members busy?" thirty-six schools or 52.2% answered "Yes," and twenty-four schools or 34.8% replied "No." One school indicated that its council was kept partially busy and eight schools did not answer.

No school felt that its council was overloaded with activities at all times. Sixty schools or 86.9% indicated definitely that their schools were not overloaded with activities. One school indicated that at certain times the council was too busy, and one school indicated some members were overloaded, others had little to do. Seven schools made no reply.

A study of Table XV will reveal the status of the student council in relation to the handling of school funds. In thirty-nine schools or 56.4% the council has some control over some school funds.



TABLE XV

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF SCHOOLS REPLYING RELATIVE  
TO COUNCIL CONTROL OVER SCHOOL FUNDS

Controls some school funds (1)	No. of Cases (2)	Percentage (3)
Yes	14	20.3
No	23	33.3
Partially	20	29.0
Its own	5	7.3
No answer	7	10.1
Totals	69	100.0

It is readily seen that one-third of the schools reporting do not allow the pupil participation organization to manage any funds and in 29% of the schools, partial control is granted.

Methods of informing student body of council action.

Table XVI reveals the methods used to inform the student body of council action. A study of the table will reveal that the most common device is to have the representatives from the home room report back to their groups. The total is greater than the number of schools reporting in the study because in some cases several methods were used by one school and some schools failed to supply any information relative to this factor.



TABLE XVI

## METHODS OF INFORMING THE STUDENT BODY OF COUNCIL ACTION

Factor (1)	Number (2)
Through home room representatives	24
Bulletins and Notices	17
Assemblies	8
School Paper	6
Minutes read in home room or section room	6
Public address system	3
Miscellaneous	8
Total	72

The values of the pupil participation organization.

Forty-five schools or 65.2% of those reporting indicated that in their opinion their school would not function as well without a student council. Only ten schools or 14.5% indicated that they felt their school would function as well without a council. Five schools qualified their answers. Their comments are as follows,

"Maybe, but it can be a great help."

"Yes, I think so."

"This year, yes, next year, no."





"Maybe, Why not?"

"Yes, probably."

Nine schools made no answer. The data seems to indicate that the majority of persons reporting feel that the student council is a worthwhile organization in the school.

In answer to the question, "In your judgment is the council contributing to the advantage of the school?" fifty-eight schools or 84.1% of those replying, answered "Yes," one school indicated "No," eight indicated its contribution was doubtful, and one administrator indicated it had little direct influence. Eight schools failed to answer. The data reveals that over four out of five respondents feel that the council is making a worthwhile contribution to the school.

A study of Table XVII will reveal the opinions of persons answering the questionnaire in connection with the improvement or deterioration of the Council within the past four years. It will be readily seen that 53.6% indicated that the council had improved. It is interesting to note that only four schools or 5.8% indicated any deterioration of their council.



TABLE XVII

DISTRIBUTION OF REPLIES RELATIVE TO THE IMPROVEMENT  
OR DETERIORATION OF THE COUNCIL IN PAST FOUR YEARS

Factor (1)	Number (2)	Percentage (3)
Improved	37	53.6
Remained the same	11	16.0
Deteriorated	4	5.8
Both	2	2.9
No Answer	15	21.7
Total	69	100.0

The values claimed for pupil participation in school control were so well expressed by the administrators, teachers, sponsors and council members that their exact replies are reported. No attempt was made to tabulate their replies because it was felt that the actual wording revealed a greater clarity of meaning and a higher degree of forcefulness. However, the comments of the respondents are grouped here in the patterns they seemed to form, respective to certain types of values. Values resulting in the development of democratic practices and procedures:

"They learn the democratic way of doing things."

"Example of democracy in school system."





"It gives the students a chance to view their opinions in a democratic way."

"Provides practice in democratic living within the school community."

"Practical experience in democratic processes."

"Provides democratic participation."

"Develops ideas of democracy."

"Develops a democratic procedure in student participation in school activities and administration."

"It gives the students an opportunity to practice representative democracy. They are an organized group ready to undertake any special job, or discuss or perhaps settle student grievances. Helps create a democratic atmosphere in school - greater individual interest in school as individual shares."

"It gives pupils an opportunity to practice democratic citizenship."

"Training of our students for life situations, election of representatives, obedience of rules and regulations, participation in the functions of a democracy."

"It does make a gesture that the school authorities do recognize democratic principles."

"The students have opportunity to actually practice using some of the principles of democratic government."



Values resulting in the development of citizenship:

"Sets up a citizenship laboratory for the school."

"The major value of any council is that it paves the way for, and gives to the city and country better citizens."

Values resulting in the development of morale, school pride, cooperation, and responsibility:

"Cooperative actions are possible - students - faculty."

"Development of a sense of responsibility."

"Trains students to plan for themselves."

"It helps arouse school pride, to put and keep the school on top; teaches parliamentary law, is gradually making the students conscious of the importance of self-discipline before self-rule can be established."

"It fosters a spirit of cooperation among pupils and teachers."

"Unification of the school."

"Better cooperation between students, among classes, faculty and students - community relationship also has been improved."

"Through the work of the council a feeling of school unity is being developed."

"It sets and raises standards in the school."

Miscellaneous values: Included in this group are some values and opinions that seem to indicate that some administrators



have a selfish and narrow viewpoint toward this activity.

"Favorable attitude-students like to get the honor."

"In times when crises develop it forms the medium for controlling student opinion as well as registering it."

"It does give the pupils a way of having a voice in school affairs."

"Training in parliamentary procedure."

"Keeps the administration in touch with the students."

"Safety valve."

"Keeps principal on his toes. It makes youngsters conscious of the problems and responsibilities."

"Meeting of group of better students for exchange of ideas."

"Provides a valuable instrument to aid student grievances and to promote constructive programs and gives the students the feeling that they are a recognized force in shaping to some extent their school lives."

"I question the values."

"Maintains a large treasury to buy things needed in school."

"Membership is held in high esteem by the student body."

"Frequent contact with office."

"Develops self government."

"Members estimate values of certain actions and decisions of authority."





Helps them to form social values and also gives them opportunity for individual and collective actions."

"Directs students to form and state opinions clearly and definitely."

"Potentially a governing body."

"Keeps faculty well informed of student ideas."

"Gives faculty opportunity to get student opinion."

"Awareness of student problems."

"They can handle many minor problems thereby giving the advisors more time to work on the major ones."

"Student opinion - direction - control, self government, self discipline, self planning, consideration of school problems."

"Gives good business training."

"Gives some measure of opportunity for the effectuating of as many legitimate student desires as is consistent with the actual possibilities of the situation."

"It creates an interest in the students as to how the school functions."

"It helps to exchange ideas between the student body and the advisors."

The values claimed for pupil participation in school control by those persons answering the questionnaire are many and varied. It would seem that many feel that the greatest value resulting from this type of activity is in the area of the de-



velopment of democratic actions and attitudes which would result in the development of good citizens within a democracy.

Problems and difficulties encountered in administering the student council. Table XVIII reveals the major problems and difficulties found in administering the student council. Fifty-four schools supplied data in connection with this factor of administration. Three of these schools indicated that they had no problems.

TABLE XVIII  
PROBLEMS OF ADMINISTERING THE STUDENT COUNCIL

Factor (1)	Number (2)
Time to meet	14
Place to meet	6
Poor leadership	4
Lack of responsibility	4
Desire for too much authority	4
Lack of interest	3
Lack of initiative and enthusiasm	3
Unqualified members	3
Time for council activities	1
Size of school (large)	1
Varying quality of members	1
Cooperation of other students	1
Too much talking, too little activity	1
Competition from other activities	1
Difficulty in obtaining 100% activity	1
Lack of awareness of students problems	1
Lack of faculty cooperation	1
Lack of activity	1

The data reveals a great diversity of problems are to be





found in administering the student council in the senior high schools of Connecticut. It is interesting to note that "time to meet" is the most frequently mentioned problem. Previous research has indicated that the major problems usually dealt with lack of pupil responsibility, poor leadership, lack of initiative, and lack of faculty cooperation.

Summary. The following points seem to summarize the extent and status of pupil participation in school control in the senior high schools of Connecticut.

1. It would seem that at least 70% of the senior high schools of Connecticut have some form of pupil participation in school control. Of the schools providing data for this investigation 88.5% have indicated some form of pupil participation in school control is in operation at the present time.

2. Pupil participation in school control is found in schools of all sizes. There is no apparent relation between size of school and operation of a student participation program. Student councils were found in schools ranging from less than 100 pupils to schools of over 3000 pupils. In schools of all sizes, over 66% of those reporting had student participation organizations.

3. Pupil participation in school control in Connecticut's senior high schools is beyond the experimental stage. About 68% of the organizations have been functioning five years



or more. The median age of councils is approximately ten years.

4. The most common type of organization is the single house student council, fifty-nine of sixty-nine schools or 85.5% utilizing this type of organization.

5. The median council size was found to be twenty-four, although councils ranged in size from nine members to eighty-five members.

6. Members were elected to councils in twenty-two cases or 32% by classes and in twenty cases or 29% by home rooms out of sixty-nine schools furnishing data. A combination of several methods used for selection of members was found in seventeen schools.

7. Restrictions in membership were found in thirty-five or 50.7% of the senior high schools.

The most frequent factors in the restriction of members are scholarship, behavior, and approval of faculty and/ or principal.

8. The length of term of office in the council is one year in fifty-nine or 85.5% of the schools having councils.

In fifty-two schools or 75.3% a council member or officer may succeed himself in office.

Restrictions on holding office in the council were found in twenty-one schools, thirty-two schools reported no restrictions.



9. About 80% of the councils meet during school hours, 75% have a regularly assigned room for meetings, about 28% meet weekly and about 25% meet bi-monthly.

10. 94% of the schools reported they had council advisors or sponsors. Forty-two schools or 60.8% have one council advisor, fifteen schools or 21.7% have two advisors. In fifty schools or 72.5% the principal appoints the advisor. The average time spent weekly by the advisor on council affairs is 2.18 hours. In thirty-nine schools out of sixty-nine the advisor averages two hours or less weekly on council affairs.

11. Seventeen schools exercised legislative powers only, twenty-one exercised legislative and executive powers, and eleven exercised legislative, executive and judicial powers.

12. In fifty-six schools or 81% the council does not function as a student court.

13. In sixty-one schools or 88.4% the principal has the power to veto council actions. The veto power has never been exercised in twenty-two schools and very seldom used in fifteen schools.

14. Twenty-three schools feel that the councils power may be increased, thirty-three feel they may not be increased.





15. Forty-seven schools believe the council receives the cooperation of the faculty in exercising its powers. No school replied in the negative.

16. Fifty-nine schools or 88.5% indicated they had a written constitution.

17. In 52% of the schools it is felt the council takes part in sufficient activities to keep all members busy.

18. In thirty-nine schools or 56.4% the council has control of some school funds.

19. Reports by home room representatives, bulletins and notices, and assemblies are the three most frequently used means of informing the student body of council action.

20. Forty-five schools or 65.2% gave the opinion that their school would not function as well without a council. Fifty-eight schools or 84% stated the opinion that the council contributed to the advantage of the school.

21. Thirty-seven schools or 53.6% indicated that in their opinion the council had improved in the last four years. Only four schools were of the opinion there was an unqualified deterioration.

22. The chief problem in administering the council was stated as "time to meet," it being reported by fourteen schools.



## CHAPTER V

## A CRITICAL EVALUATION

The purpose of this study was to determine the present status of pupil participation in school control in the senior high schools of Connecticut with the ultimate objective of evaluating the program in respect to basic principles of organization and administration deemed necessary for the successful operation of such a program and to evaluate it also by comparing the program in Connecticut with current practices in general.

Evaulation in terms of basic principles.

First principle: A plan for pupil participation in school should be based on a continuous felt need; it should be introduced gradually in accordance with pupil ability to assume responsibility; and should be a continuous process for the whole school.

The results of the survey of the senior high schools of Connecticut revealed that some form of pupil participation in school is in progress in at least 70% of these schools. This would seem to indicate that the programs were filling a need felt by the schools. A program arbitrarily forced upon a school does not fill a need and often results in failure, but





failure was not apparent in any of the schools reporting in this study. Furthermore, thirty schools definitely stated that there was a need for such a program in the future. An examination of the values claimed for the program also seems to indicate that this activity meets definite needs of the school program. Although there was no objective data indicating that the program has been introduced gradually in the various schools, there was definite indication that the pupils are given responsibilities and powers only as they are able to assume them, which seems to indicate gradual growth and development. It would seem logical that the program of pupil participation in the various schools is a continuous educational process for if it were not, there could be no logical justification for its continued operation in the schools.

Second principle: There is no best form of organization nor any definite sized group which is ideal; these factors should be determined by the local situation.

The student council was found to be the most common type of pupil participation in school control in the senior high schools of Connecticut. The council is a central body of students who are representative of the various school groups. There was found a variety of council organizations which seems to indicate that each school set up its own plan of organization to meet its own needs.



Third principle: Any plan for pupil participation in school control should have as a basis a written constitution which definitely states its powers and duties and the source of its power and its limitations. Each organization should, if possible, evolve its own constitution.

A written constitution was found in more than four out of five schools reporting. An examination of these documents revealed that the powers and duties of the organization were clearly stated and a statement as to the source of power was included. In the thirty-two constitutions examined there was definite indications that the documents had been evolved locally to fit the needs of the particular school.

Fourth principle: Membership in an organization of pupil participation should be based on democratic ideals and practices. Membership should be open to all, both pupils and faculty, the restriction of pupils beyond minimum requirements of scholarship should not be condoned.

Membership in student councils seems to be restricted in many ways in the schools reporting, and on some rather undemocratic bases. About 50% of the schools reported the use of restrictions on membership. The measures used extended beyond minimum scholarship requirements to the use of such factors as behavior, approval of faculty and principal, and good citizenship which many claim are unjustifiable in the light of



our democratic form of government and our aim of training for citizenship in the schools. There was no evidence indicating faculties were members of the council.

Fifth principle: Pupil participation in school control must have adequate and continuous guidance in the form of qualified sponsors who are sympathetic to the movement, enthusiastic, loyal, cooperative, and progressive.

The principle of adequate guidance for pupil participation does not seem to be too well adhered to in the schools reporting. Although most of the schools indicated that they had advisors; over half of these advisors spent less than two hours weekly in guidance of the organization. There was no data which indicated the qualifications of the council sponsor.

Sixth principle: Pupil participation in school control must receive enthusiastic cooperation from the whole school, pupils, faculty and administration.

No data was obtained from the pupils of the schools being surveyed; therefore, there is no direct evidence to indicate that the pupils are enthusiastically cooperative with the program. However, lack of cooperation was seldom mentioned as a difficulty in administering the program. In the matter of faculty cooperation the data indicated that they as a group were cooperative. In very few cases was there any evidence





that the administrators indicated a spirit that was not co-operative.

Seventh principle: Pupil participation in school control in order to be successful must be based on adequate assumption of responsibility by pupils. This responsibility being achieved through purposeful activities for all.

The data revealed that a wide variety of activities were being carried on in the student councils of Connecticut's senior high schools. The activities for the most part seemed to be worthwhile and provide adequate responsibility for the pupils in the organization.

Eighth principle: The organization for pupil participation in school control should meet on school time in a regularly scheduled meeting place, and have all necessary facilities in order to function as a worthwhile school activity.

About four out of five student councils meet on school time and the majority of the councils have a regularly assigned meeting place. No data was obtained relative to the possession of the necessary facilities required for a student council organization.

Ninth principle: The school must be continuously informed of the policies, and actions of the organization for pupil participation in school control. The strength of the plan is in proportion to the support given it by the school. Effective



liaison must be maintained between the organization and student body.

The data reveals that the student body as a whole in the schools reporting in this survey are well informed as to the functioning of their councils. A variety of measures are being utilized to keep the student body informed and up to date on the work of the council.

Tenth principle: Pupil participation in school control must be constantly evaluated. To justify its existence as a part of the school its strengths and weaknesses respective to derived aims must be continuously appraised.

It would seem that evaluation of the student council is being continuously carried on from the replies and comments received to many of the questions in this study. There is a definite indication that administrators and sponsors are cognizant of the many problems involved in administering a program of pupil participation and are devoting as much time as possible to the solving of these problems.

In conclusion, it would seem that pupil participation in school control in the senior high schools of Connecticut follows rather closely most of the basic principles deemed necessary for the successful operation of a program of pupil participation in school control. There is need, however, for a re-examination of the factors being used to restrict pupils





from student council membership as it seems at present the measures being used are unjustifiable. In addition, there seems to be a need for more supervision and guidance of the student council. Although it would seem that most of them are operating with success, more adequate guidance could well lead to greater accomplishments of the council in the life of the school.

Evaluation in terms of current practices. In this section each numbered paragraph indicates a summarization of a current general practice and is followed by practice in Connecticut's senior high schools.

1. An examination of previous related research seemed to indicate that pupil participation in school control, particularly in respect to the student council type of organization, has been of comparatively recent origin and has had rapid development in the secondary schools of this country. Most research seems to have been in the area of the secondary school and has dealt mainly with the student council. The council is usually a representative group, composed of members from various school organizations such as the class, home room, clubs, and other school activities.

The student council in the senior high schools of Connecticut has been of comparatively recent development, the median age of the organizations reporting being about ten



years. The data seems to indicate rapid growth also. The extent to which the student council is being used as a means of participation seems to compare favorably with the data reported in other studies.

2. The major basis for selecting representatives for the council was found in related research to be the home room although the combinations of other methods of selection were reported. These included the selection of representatives from classes, clubs, and other activity groups.

In Connecticut the class is used slightly more than the home room as a basis for selecting council members. However, as in the country at large, there were some schools which utilized a combination of methods in selecting members. There appears to be a strong similarity between practice in Connecticut and practice in general in the matter of selecting council members.

3. Restrictions on membership in student councils were found to be a common practice, being reported in at least 60% of the schools reporting in recent national surveys.

Restrictions on membership in the councils in Connecticut seem to be slightly fewer than those reported in other studies. The difference, however, may be due to inadequate sampling in the larger surveys. The necessity for meeting scholarship requirements seems to be the most frequently used restrictive



measure employed although there does not seem to be any logical basis for its widespread use. Other requirements such as meeting the approval of the principal, good behavior, and limiting membership to upper classmen seem to be entirely undemocratic.

4. Practice in general revealed that the advisor for the council was most frequently appointed by the principal. In 70% of the schools reporting in a recent national survey the advisor spent less than an hour a day on council matters. In smaller schools the principal was frequently the advisor.

The advisor in Connecticut senior high schools does not seem to devote much time to the council, the average time being slightly over two hours per week. The council usually has but one advisor who is usually appointed by the principal. There seems to be a strong similarity in practice relating to the council advisor between Connecticut's senior high schools and secondary schools in general.

5. At least 85% of the schools reporting in previous surveys indicated that their councils had as a basis a written constitution.

An almost identical situation seems to exist in the senior high schools of Connecticut where more than four out of five schools indicated that they had written constitutions. This would seem to indicate that a written document stating the





powers and duties of the council is considered essential to the proper functioning of the organization.

6. Previous research has indicated that a wide variety of council projects and activities are being carried on by schools throughout the nation. These activities in order to be considered justifiable should be purposeful and worthwhile and should point toward the attainment of the council's objectives.

In examining the activities and projects of the councils reporting in this survey, it was found that they were very similar to those reported in other studies. Very few projects seemed to be of questionable value and most schools seemed to have a wide variety of activities, which gave the council members adequate responsibilities and duties to perform.

7. In general practice problems of administering the council were found to be common and of many types. Outstanding among them were the difficulty of securing efficient and successful leaders, lack of participation by pupils, and lack of cooperation by teachers.

Problems in this survey were generally similar although there was little mention of lack of cooperation by the faculty. The most frequently mentioned problem was that of finding the time to meet, which may be the result of an overcrowded activity program.



8. Many values were claimed for the student council and for other forms of participation in previous studies. Specific values found seemed to group themselves around the use of the council as a medium for promoting citizenship and democratic procedures and practices.

The values claimed by administrators, sponsors and teachers in this study were found to be very similar to those found in previous research. The emphasis seemed to be on the value of the council as a means of providing for democratic living within the school which would result in, or so it would seem, a realization of one of our basic objectives of education, that of training for efficient citizenship within a democracy.

In conclusion, it would seem that, except for minor differences, perhaps resulting from inadequate data, the student councils in Connecticut's senior high schools are very similar in respect to current practices to councils in secondary schools throughout the country. This is perhaps a conclusion that is to be expected when it is considered that in recent years much emphasis has been placed on the student council through local, regional, and national organizations. In addition, there has been a large amount of literature devoted to this activity in recent years.

Need for further research. The investigator fully





realizes the limitations of this study. The data obtained were not sufficient to arrive at a comprehensive critical examination of pupil participation in school control in Connecticut's senior high schools. More evidence needs to be obtained in respect to other forms of participation carried on in the schools whereby the pupils share in the control of the school before a completely accurate view can be obtained of pupil participation in school control and its justification as an integral part of our present educational system.

There is need also for an examination of this activity at the elementary and junior high school grade levels in order to ascertain whether or not pupils are being given opportunities to develop responsibilities, self-direction, self-control, and cooperation through the management of their own school and if there is proper articulation of the program between these school levels.

This study has been confined mainly to the opinions and viewpoints of adults; the administrator, the teacher, and the advisor. There is need for research which would reveal the reactions and viewpoints of those pupils participating and the student body as a whole. Without this type of data, it does not seem that either accurate or representative presentation of pupil participation in school control can be made.



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#### OTHER SOURCES

Personal Correspondence of the Investigator.



Robert F. Fitch High School  
Groton (Poquonnock Bridge)  
Conn.

February 7, 1947

Mr. Raymond Claflin  
Principal, Danbury High School  
Danbury, Connecticut

Dear Mr. Claflin:

Enclosed you will find a copy of a questionnaire pertaining to the status and extent of student participation in school control which is the basis for a study of this activity in the secondary schools of Connecticut.

The questionnaire mentioned above is in connection with a graduate study I now have in process. The problem has been approved by Dr. Worcester Warren, professor of Education, Boston University, School of Education, Boston, Massachusetts.

The enclosed questionnaire is of a preliminary nature. It is being submitted to you not for the purpose of being completed at this time, but rather for your criticism and comments respective to its completeness, type of question, length, arrangement, etc. Upon return of these preliminary questionnaires, a revised questionnaire, based on suggestions derived from your comments, will be prepared and submitted to all public secondary schools in Connecticut.

I hope that you will be able to find time from your regular duties to analyze and criticize this questionnaire and to return it to me as soon as it is practicable for you to do so.

Thanking you for your cooperation, I am

Very truly yours,

James F. Hinckley





PRELIMINARY  
STUDENT COUNCIL QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Name of school \_\_\_\_\_ No. of pupils \_\_\_\_\_
2. Does your school have a student council or any other form of pupil participation in school control? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
3. How long has the council been functioning in your school? \_\_\_\_\_ years
4. What method is used to select council members? CHECK
  - a. Elected at large \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Elected by home rooms \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Elected by classes \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. Appointed by principal \_\_\_\_\_
  - e. Other \_\_\_\_\_
5. How many members comprise the student council? No. \_\_\_\_\_
6. How often does the council meet?
  - a. Weekly \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Bi-monthly \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Monthly \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. On call \_\_\_\_\_
7. When does the council meet?
  - a. Before or after school \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. During school hours \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Evenings \_\_\_\_\_
8. Does the council have a regularly assigned room for meetings? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
9. Does the council have faculty advisors or sponsors? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. How many \_\_\_\_\_ No. \_\_\_\_\_
10. How are faculty advisors selected?
  - a. Appointment by principal \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Appointment by faculty \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Appointment by council members \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. Elected by student body \_\_\_\_\_
  - e. Other \_\_\_\_\_
11. What is the average time spent per week by advisor on student council affairs? \_\_\_\_\_ Hours
12. Are there definite restrictions on council membership? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_



- a. Scholarship \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Upperclassmen \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Behavior \_\_\_\_\_
- d. Sex \_\_\_\_\_
- e. Approval of principal or faculty \_\_\_\_\_
- f. Other \_\_\_\_\_

13. What is the length of term of office in the student council? \_\_\_\_\_

a. May a council member of officer succeed himself in office? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

14. What form of council organization does your school council have? \_\_\_\_\_

15. Does the present form of organization function satisfactorily? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

16. Which of the following powers does the council exercise?

- a. Legislative \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Executive \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Judicial \_\_\_\_\_

17. Does the student council serve as a student court? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

18. Does the principal have the power to veto council action?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

a. How often has this power been used? \_\_\_\_\_

19. Do you feel that the powers of the council could be increased? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

20. Does the student council have a written constitution?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

a. Is the constitution distributed to the student body?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

b. Is it distributed to all council members?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

21. What are the major purposes of the student council in your in your school? \_\_\_\_\_



22. What are the chief activities of the student council in your school? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
23. Does the council take part in or control sufficient activities to keep all members busy?  
 a. Is the council overloaded with activities? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_
24. Does the student council have control over the school funds?  
 Yes \_\_\_\_\_  
 No \_\_\_\_\_  
 Partially \_\_\_\_\_
25. In your judgment is the council performing to the advantage of the school?  
 Yes \_\_\_\_\_  
 No \_\_\_\_\_
26. In your opinion has the efficiency of the council improved or deteriorated in the years 1942-1946? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
27. What are the chief difficulties encountered in your school regarding the administration of the student council? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
28. How is the student body informed of student council action? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
29. What are the major values of the student council? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
30. Would your school function as well without a student council? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
31. Would you kindly enclose a copy of the constitution of the student council of your school?
32. Additional comments. \_\_\_\_\_  
 (OPTIONAL) Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
 Position \_\_\_\_\_  
 School \_\_\_\_\_

\*You will be provided with a summary of the data collected upon completion of this investigation.





Robert E. Fitch High School  
Groton (Poquonnock Bridge)  
Connecticut  
March 19, 1947

Mr. Raymond Claflin  
Principal, Danbury High School  
Danbury, Connecticut

Dear Mr. Claflin:

Enclosed you will find a copy of a questionnaire pertaining to the status and extent of student participation in school control which is the basis for a study of this activity in the secondary schools of Connecticut.

The questionnaire mentioned above is in connection with a graduate study I now have in process. The problem has been approved by Dr. Worcester Warren, professor of Education, Boston University School of Education, Boston, Massachusetts.

The enclosed questionnaire is the result of considerable research and has recently been revised on the basis of criticisms from principals in some of Connecticut's secondary schools. The majority of questions may be answered by a check mark or by "yes" or "no." It is hoped that you will be able to find a few minutes time to complete the questionnaire and return it to me as soon as it is practicable for you to do so.

Thanking you for your cooperation, I am

Very truly yours,

James F. Hinckley



FINAL  
STUDENT COUNCIL QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Name of school \_\_\_\_\_ No. of pupils \_\_\_\_\_
2. Does your school have a student council or any other form of pupil participation in school control? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. Do you anticipate a need for any form of pupil participation in school control in the future? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
3. How long has the council been functioning in your school? \_\_\_\_\_ years
4. What type of council organization does your school have?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Does the present form of organization function satisfactorily? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
6. What are the major objectives of the student council in your school? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. What method is used to select council members?
  - a. Elected at large \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Elected by home rooms \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Elected by classes \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. Appointed by principal \_\_\_\_\_
  - e. Other \_\_\_\_\_
8. How many members comprise the student council? No. \_\_\_\_\_
9. How often does the council meet?
  - a. Weekly \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Bi-monthly \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Monthly \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. On call \_\_\_\_\_
10. When does the council meet?
  - a. Before or after school \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. During school hours \_\_\_\_\_
11. Does the council have a regularly assigned room for meetings? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
12. Does the council have faculty advisors or sponsors? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_





13. How are faculty advisors selected?  
 a. Appointment by principal \_\_\_\_\_  
 b. Appointment by faculty \_\_\_\_\_  
 c. Appointment by council members \_\_\_\_\_  
 d. Elected by student body \_\_\_\_\_  
 e. Other \_\_\_\_\_
14. What is the average time spent weekly per advisor on student council affairs? \_\_\_\_\_ Hours
15. Are there definite restrictions on council membership?  
 Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
 a. Scholarship \_\_\_\_\_  
 b. Upperclassmen \_\_\_\_\_  
 c. Behavior \_\_\_\_\_  
 d. Sex \_\_\_\_\_  
 e. Approval of principal or faculty \_\_\_\_\_  
 f. Other \_\_\_\_\_
16. What is the length of term of office in the council? \_\_\_\_\_  
 a. May a council member or officer succeed himself in office? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
 b. Are there restrictions on holding office in the council? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
17. Which of the following powers does the council exercise?  
 a. Legislative \_\_\_\_\_  
 b. Executive \_\_\_\_\_  
 c. Judicial \_\_\_\_\_
18. Does the student council serve as a student court? Yes No \_\_\_\_\_
19. Does the principal have the power to veto council action?  
 Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
 a. How often has this power been used? \_\_\_\_\_
20. Does the council have the cooperation of the faculty in exercising its powers? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
21. Do you feel that the powers of the council could be increased? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
22. Does the student council have a written constitution?  
 Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
 a. Is the constitution distributed to the student body? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
 b. Is it posted for the student body? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
 c. Is it distributed to all council members? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_



23. What are the major activities of the student council in your school? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
24. Does the council take part in or control sufficient activities to keep all members busy? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
a. Is the council overloaded with activities? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
25. Does the student council have control over any school funds?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_  
No \_\_\_\_\_  
Partially \_\_\_\_\_
26. In your judgment is the council contributing to the advantage of the school? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
27. Has the efficiency of the council contributing to the advantage of the school? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
28. What are the chief problems encountered in your school regarding the administration of the student council? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
29. How is the student body informed of student council action? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
30. What are the major values of the student council? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
31. Would your school function as well without a student council? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
32. WOULD YOU KINDLY ENCLOSE A COPY OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE STUDENT COUNCIL OF YOUR SCHOOL.
33. Additional comments. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(Optional) Name and Title \_\_\_\_\_  
School \_\_\_\_\_

\*Do you desire a copy of the summary of data collected upon completion of this investigation? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_





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